REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 3, 6-24, 27, 32 and 36 are now pending in the application. Claims 3, 6, 7, 12, 14, 20, 22, 27, 32 and 36 are currently amended. Claim 25 was canceled.

Item 2: The status of the U.S. application recited on page 23, line 1 was updated to indicate that the application is now abandoned.

Item 3: The corrections to Claims 3 and 14 were made as suggested by the Examiner.

Item 4: The dependency of the cited claims has been corrected.

Item 5: Claims 6-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. The claims have been amended to specify whether said first or said second foreign RNA or both are intended, thus clarifying the metes and bounds. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Item 6: Claims 3, 6-25, 27, 32 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph. The term "16 kDa" has been removed in the amended claims as suggested by the Examiner. Hence it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Item 7: Claims 13-14 and 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph for failing to teach how to use the invention commensurate in scope with the claims. This rejection is respectfully traversed. The specification clearly teaches the construction of the vectors as claimed in Claims 3 and 6 and the dependent claims 13-14 and 16-19. The utility of such constructs is supported throughout the specification. Claim 13 is supported by the disclosure in Example 14 wherein the screening of such a vector is described, and on page 17 lines 12-21 wherein the class of Nop 10-like small nucleolar ribonucleoprotein is described. The utility of vectors such as that described in Claim 13 in changing phenotypic traits in the plant host, affecting biochemical pathways within the

plant, or affecting endogenous gene expression within the plant is described in many places in the specification (e.g., page 10, line 6 to page 13, line 28). With respect to Claim 14, support is found in the disclosure in Example 15 wherein the screening of such a vector is described, and on page 17, line 22 bridging to page 18, line 5 wherein the class of DEAD box helicases is described. The utility of vectors such as that described in Claim 14 in changing phenotypic traits in the plant host, affecting biochemical pathways within the plant, or affecting endogenous gene expression within the plant is described in many places in the specification (e.g., page 10, line 6 to page 13, line 28). Claim 16 is supported by the disclosure in Example 17 as cited by the Examiner. The utility of vectors such as that described in Claim 16 in changing phenotypic traits in the plant host, affecting biochemical pathways within the plant, or affecting endogenous gene expression within the plant is described in many places in the specification (e.g., page 10, line 6 to page 13, line 28). Furthermore, the specification supports the bipartite RNA viral vector of Claim 17 in Example 18, of Claim 18 in Example 19, and of Claim 19 in Example 6. The utility of such vectors in changing phenotypic traits in the plant host, affecting biochemical pathways within the plant, or affecting endogenous gene expression within the plant is described in many places in the specification (e.g., page 10, line 6 to page 13, line 28). In addition, the utility is described in the specification starting on page 28, line 6 as quoted below:

> The present invention also provides a method of isolating a conserved gene such as a gene encoding a GTP binding protein, DEAD box RNA helicase, Nop10-like small nuclear ribonucleoprotein, putrescine N-methyltransferase, methionine synthase, and PRP19-like spliceosomal protein, and CRS2 chloroplast gene from rice, barley, corn, soybean, maize, oilseed, and other plant of commercial interest, using another gene having homology with gene being isolated.

And on page 1 starting on line 26:

> Valuable and basic agricultural plants, including corn, soybeans and rice are also targets for genome projects because the information obtained thereby may prove very beneficial for increasing world food production and improving the quality and value of agricultural products. The United States Congress is considering launching a corn genome project. By helping to unravel the genetics hidden in

> the corn genome, the project could aid in understanding and combating common diseases of grain crops. It could also provide a big boost for efforts to engineer plants to improve grain yields and resist drought, pests, salt, and other extreme environmental conditions. Such advances are critical for a world population expected to double by 2050. Currently, there are four species which provide 60% of all human food: wheat, rice, corn, and potatoes, and the strategies for increasing the productivity of these plants is dependent on rapid discovery of the presence of a trait in these plants, and the function of unknown gene sequences in these plants.

Applicants submit that the invention claimed in Claims 13-14 and 16-19 is useful, and that the specification teaches one skilled in the art to use the claimed bipartite RNA viral vectors commensurate with the scope of the claims. Hence, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

Conclusions:

Claims 3, 6-24, 27, 32 and 36 are now pending in the application. In view of the amendments and the comments above, the objections and rejections have been overcome. Reconsideration, withdrawal of the objections and rejections and early indication of allowance are respectfully requested. If any issues remain, the examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned for prompt resolution.

Attached is a petition for a two-month extension of time under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a) for sufficient time to accept this response. The commissioner hereby is authorized to charge payment of any fees under 37 CFR § 1.17, which may become due in connection with the instant application or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No.500933.

Respectfully submitted,

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